in the draft MoU. Issues relating to the draft MoU continue to be under consideration of the Governments of Bangladesh and India even as India explores with Myanmar other options of importing natural gas into India from Myanmar.

Promotion of tourism industry in Assam

1699. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which the growth of Tourism Industry is tardy in Assam as compared to other States;

(b) whether it is a fact that the industry is not getting proper attention from the Centre; and

(c) if so, what is the Central Government's immediate target in boosting the industry and whether there will be any special budget allocation in the coming financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Development of tourism is the responsibility of the State Governments/U.Ts. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India provides financial assistance for creation of tourism-related infrastructure including tourism circuits and tourist destinations.

(b) and (c) Budget outlay of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is not allocated on State-wise basis but on the basis of projects submitted by the States that have been prioritized in consultation with the Centre and are complete in all respect. The Ministry has sanctioned financial assistance to the State of Assam during last three years, as under:—

Year	Amount Sanctioned
2002-03	Rs. 721.30 lakh
2003-04	Rs. 313.46 lakh
2004-05	Rs. 821.75 lakh

With development of much needed infrastructure, tourist arrivals in the State have increased by 6.1% 10.2% for domestic and foreign tourists respectively, in the year 2004 compared to the previous year *i.e.* 2003.

Development of villages for tourist spots

1700. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop some villages in the country and made them tourist destinations, thereby benefiting villagers socially and financially;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some villages have been identified for their development into tourist spots;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the amount likely to be spent for development of each such village; and

(f) by when the work on the project is likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (f) Yes, sir. The creation of infrastructure in Rural areas having potential for tourism is being supported under the existing scheme of Destination Development. The objective is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages, which have core-competency in terms of craft/handloom/textiles etc.

Under the scheme funds are sanctioned and released based on the proposals received from the State/UT Governments for infrastructure development at Rural sites. Based on proposals received from State Governments during the Tenth Five Year Plan the details of Central Financial Assistance extended for development of each such villages is enclosed as Statement.